

Message Text

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SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 MCT-01 /098 W

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R 101008Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 861

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 10176

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ET, FT, SO

SUBJ: DEFECTION OF ALLEGED FLCS PRESIDENT TO ETHIOPIA

1. SUMMARY: ETHIOPIANS CALLED PRESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 8 TO ANNOUNCE DEFECTION TO ETHIOPIA OF ALLEGED FORMER FLCS PRESIDENT SALAH NOUR. IN PREPARED STATEMENT, NOUR STATED FLCS INSTRUMENT OF MOGADISCIO, ETHIOPIAN POSITION ON DJIBOUTI SERVES INTERESTS OF PEOPLE OF TFAI, AND SOMALIA INFILTRATING ARMED MEN INTO TFAI TO INFLUENT REFERENDUM AND EVENTUALLY INCORPOATE TFAI INTO SOMALIA. END SUMMARY.

2. ON BEHALF OF MOFA, MINISTRY OF INFORMATION CALLED SURPRISE CONFERENCE FOR PRESS AND INTERESTED MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS TO PRESENT SALAH NOUR, ALLEGED FORMER PRESIDENT OF FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOMALI COAST (FLCS) WHO HAD RESIGNED HIS POSITION THREE WEEKS AGO AND FLED TO ETHIOPIA. IN PREPARED STATEMENT, SALAH STATED FLCS INSTRUMENT OF SOMALI GOVERNMENT
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AND THAT POSITIONS TAKEN BY FRONT AT 30TH UN GENERAL

ASSEMBLY, 27TH SESSION OF COMMITTEE OF COORDINATION FOR THE LIBERATION OF AFRICA AT DAR ES SALAAM, AND AT OAU MAURITIUS MINISTERIAL WERE DICTATED BY MOGADISCIO. STATEMENT CONTINUED BY NOTING THAT "PRESENT POSITION OF ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT SERVES INTERESTS OF PEOPLES OF TFAI", THAT FLCS HAD ONLY THREE MEMBERS FROM DJIBOUTI, AND REMAINDER OF FRONT MEMBERS RECRUITED AND TRAINED TO REALIZE MOGADISCIO'S EXPANSIONIST GOALS. AS EVIDENCE, HE NOTED IMPRISONMENT OF ADEN ROBLE, SECRETARY GENERAL OF FLCS, AND OTHER FRONT MEMBERS IN LATE 1975 FOR OPPOSING MOGADISCIO-DICTATED POLICIES FOR THE FRONT. FLCS TODAY IS NOTHING BUT SPECIAL UNIT OF SOMALI ARMY AND IS INFILTRATING FRENCH-SPEAKING ARMED MEN INTO DJIBOUTI TO PARTICIPATE IN TFAI REFERENDUM. NEXT STEP OF THESE MILITARY TRAINED YOUNG MEN WILL BE TO STAGE COUP D'ETAT AND ASK FOR UNION OF TFAI WITH SOMALIA.

3. SEPTEMBER 9 ETHIOPIAN HERALD'S COVERAGE OF STORY PLACED ITS EMPHASIS ON NOUR'S COMMENTS THAT SOMALIA'S EXPANSIONIST POLICY IS HINDERING SPEEDY ATTAINMENT OF DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE. ARTICLE NOTED THAT NEW PRESIDENT OF FLCS IS ABDULAH WADBERIE.

4. EMBASSY OFFICER RAISED MATTER WITH KNOWLEDGEABLE SOMALI DIPLOMAT SEPTEMBER 9, WHO CONFIRMED THAT SALAH NOUR WAS NAME OF PAST PRESIDENT OF FLCS. HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO IDENTIFY NOUR BY NEWSPAPER PICTURE, BUT EXPRESSED VIEW THAT IT UNLIKELY ETHIOPIANS WOULD PRESENT NOUR TO PUBLIC UNLESS THAT WERE REASONABLY CONFIDENT OF HIS CREDENTIALS. HE NOTED THAT NOUR WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE "OLD GUARD" OF FLCS AND SUGGESTED THAT NOUR MAY NOT HAVE RESIGNED BUT MAY HAVE BEEN REPLACED INSTEAD AS PRESIDENT OF THE FRONT.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION MOGADISCIO OR DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE ON SALAH NOUR AND ADEN ROBLE.

6. COMMENT: USIS OFFICER WHO ATTENDED PRESS BRIEFING UNIMPRESSED BY NOUR WHO HANDLED PRESS QUESTIONS POORLY. PREPARED STATEMENT PERHAPS SAYS MORE ABOUT ETHIOPIA'S FEARS AND POLICIES FOR TFAI THAN IT DOES ABOUT FLCS. EMPHASIS ON INFILTRATION AND SUBVERSION INDICATE ETHIOPIA
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FAR MORE CONCERNED ABOUT COVERT, AS OPPOSED TO OVERT, SOMALI MILITARY MOVES. STATEMENT ALSO CLEARLY DESIGNED TO DISCREDIT FLCS AS LIBERATION FRONT ACCREDITED BY OAU.

7. COPIES OF FULL STATEMENT AND ARTICLE BEING POUCHED DEPARTMENT AND MOGADISCIO.
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